

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL

ELDERLY and DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES for July 8, 2014

The DVCC Elderly and Domestic Violence Committee met on July 8, 2014 at 2:00 p.m. at the Carvel State Office Building, Wilmington. Attending the meeting were: Patricia Dailey-Lewis, Department of Justice and Chair; Ashley Biden and Regina Gray, Delaware Center for Justice; Alana Wilder and Nicolette Pellegrino, Wilmington Police Department - Victim Services; Dawn Culp, Bayhealth; Gina Schoenberg, Department of Justice; Natasha Smith and Pat Kwetkauskie - DVCC staff.

Call to Order: Patricia Dailey-Lewis called the meeting to order.

Introductions: Attendees introduced themselves.

Old Business:

1. Pat Dailey-Lewis provided a brief history of the committee and recommended that the committee continue to focus on domestic violence in the broad sense.
2. There was consensus that the focus of the committee should remain on elderly who are victims of domestic violence.

New Business

1. The Committee identified some needs related to the elderly who are victims of domestic violence and suggested strategies to address those needs.
 - Educating the public about domestic violence and the elderly as well as “red flags” that indicate elderly are being abused:
 - Conduct outreach and education to faith communities through women’s Bible study groups.
 - Addressing housing issues particularly since many elder victims don’t want to leave their homes
 - Explore space availability at the YWCA Single Women’s Residence
 - Obtaining adequate resources to assist elderly victims of domestic violence:
 - Collect data to substantiate domestic violence incidents involving elderly victims.
 - Collaborate with Adult Protective Services (APS) as a resource to obtain this information.

- Reducing elders' mistrust of the system such as APS, law enforcement and the court system, and
- Strengthening responses to address elderly dv victims' reluctance to prosecute loved one who have abused them:
 - Promote awareness of the Protection From Abuse option for elderly DV victims instead of or in addition to criminal charges.
 - Explore the possibility of Diversion Services instead of incarceration for certain DV offenses – goal would be to rehabilitate offenders to mitigate re-offense.
 - Establish a peer-based elderly victim advocacy network to provide transportation and accompaniment to appointments and court hearings related to DV victimization.
 - Provide Judicial training for all Courts on elderly and domestic violence.
 - Employ interview techniques with elderly victims of domestic violence that are responsive to issues involving elders' memory, speech, and expression.

2. Next Steps

- Pat Dailey-Lewis proposed to meet with judges from the Family Court to discuss training on topics related to elderly and domestic violence.
- There was consensus to invite a Commissioner from the Family Court to attend the Elderly and DV Committee meetings.
- Pat Dailey-Lewis requested that everyone submit their ideas for goals for the DVCC Elderly and Domestic Violence Committee to her. Once ideas are received, she and Pat Kwetkauskie will identify 3-4 goals for the Committee to focus on.

3. Next Meeting

- The next meeting of the DVCC Elderly and Domestic Violence Committee will be held on September 3, 2014 at 2:00 p.m. The meeting location will be the 5th Floor Conference Room in the Attorney General's Office, Carvel State Office Building in Wilmington.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pat Kwetkauskie, DVCC Staff
August 21, 2014